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S E C R E T AMMAN 005499

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDAN MAY IMPLEMENT STRICT CONTROLS ON ENTRY OF IRAQIS

Classified By: PolCouns Doug Silliman for reasons 1.5 (B)(D)

11. (C) Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb told Charge and EconCouns August 28 that the GOJ is actively considering a considerable tightening of controls on Iraqis entering Jordan, including the possibility of a new visa requirement. Abul Ragheb said that Jordan was very concerned about the authenticity of Iraqi travel documents, noting that "there are new passports floating around," and the GOJ is unable to determine whether they are valid. The Charge inquired whether the recently destroyed Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad would be able to accept, adjudicate or issue visas.

12. (C) PolCouns and PolOff subsequently confirmed the outlines of an emerging new GOJ policy with MFA legal advisor Samer Naber and MFA Private Office Iraq action officer Samer Dabbas. Both confirmed that an August 28 meeting between Interior and GID officials had determined that Jordan will recognize expired Iraqi passports only for departure from Jordan back to Iraq, but not/not for entry into Jordan.

13. (S) Naber (likely exceeding his brief, please protect) said that it was his understanding that border officials would not/not recognize the validity of either expired or CPA-extended Iraqi passports. In addition, Naber said, a preliminary decision had been made to require visas of Iraqi travelers, and that, although visa applications and fees would be collected at the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad, all decisions regarding issuance or denial would be made in Amman. The basis for this decision, he said, was a "security directive" from the GID expressing grave concern that undesirable Iraqis could gain access to Jordan under the currently unclear (and much more generous) entry rules. Naber noted that this decision ran counter to an MFA memo to the PM several days ago that recommended approval of the opening of an Iraqi liaison office in Amman, and standardization and loosening of border controls on Iraqis. Naber said that he does not believe the decision to tighten border controls will affect the MFA's recommendation to permit the opening of an Iraqi liaison office in the former Iraqi Embassy. Naber said that a second meeting of the Interior Ministry and GID -- this time including MFA representation -- will be held September 2 to "discuss and finalize" these decisions.

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COMMENT  
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14. (C) Given the increasing numbers of Iraqis -- both official and private -- who are transiting Amman, a Jordanian decision not to recognize CPA-extended passports and to require visas could virtually shut down transit of Iraqis into and through Jordan, at least in the short term. It could also seriously affect the ability of CPA and newly appointed Iraqi officials to conduct a dialogue with the GOJ. This decision in process appears to be driven by security concerns, and could be due partly to the large number of ad hoc interventions of the Embassy and other organizations with the GOJ in recent weeks to permit the entry of CPA-affiliated and humanitarian case Iraqis with expired, questionable, or no travel documents.

HALE